Leicester, November 2. 1869.

Dear Mr. May, I wrote you a long note touching the article on your "Recollections," &c in a late "Liberal Christian", & in reply to yrs. rec'd last Saturday, and sent it to you by Ade. who left us this afternoon for Syracuse, meeting Edward at Worcester. This eve'g. brings me yrs. of yesterday, enclosing Dr. Gannett's to you of Oct. 29th The Dr.'s note is cautious and guarded. I do not wonder that he does not like the reflection of his attitude which your mirror compels him to look upon. He refers to an expression you attribute to him on page 341, and you ask me to give you any recollections I may have about it.

In reply I can say my recollections are quite vivid of this matter; and they further happen to be enforced & sustained by a memorandum I made from notes taken on the spot, at the time.

It was at a prolonged meeting of the Am'n. Unitarian Association the latter part of May 1844, when the subject of Slavery came up, & was very fully discussed for several days. We were assembled in the hall of the Mechanics Apprentices' Library Association, Phillips Place, Boston, and many clergymen, & some laymen, participated in the discussion. Among the latter was the late Stephen C. Phillips. At one of those sessions Mr. Garrison was present — having asked if he could come as a listener. Dr. Gannett & Rev. W. P. Lunt of Quincy appeared to feel that Mr. Garrison's presence was an offence; and in course of a most excited speech which ~~Dr.~~ Gannett then & there made, I heard him use the expression, which you quote on p. 341, touching "the hellish spirit" — well do I recal those words, and am sure of their correctness — "alive & active here", (turning & looking towards the ~~corner~~ back part of the room where Garrison sat) — Dr. Gannett is quite sure he

is not correctly reported as saying "in our midst" — that being a phrase to which he has a particular dislike. Very possibly the words were "here among us"; — de minimis non curat lex — but the idea conveyed by the words you use is the idea which he expressed, with a force & vehemence painful to see. Rev. Mr. Lunt seemed specially delighted with this throw at the Abolitionists in general, and Mr. Garrison in particular; he could ill control himself, & reaching over his foot far in advance of his seat, he struck flatly, loudly, & repeatedly on the floor, in applause.

I have no doubt that Dr. Gannett in a calmer moment, would exceedingly regret such phraseology, on grounds of taste & courtesy. But his vehement denunciations of the Abolitionists is a fact too surely established to be in any doubt. — But when he came to arraign them as enemies of the cause because they would not obey the Fugitive Slave Law, also to state his own intention to obey it, there were no attendant circumstances to call forth great vehemence of manner or speech; — it being in a R.R. car, with Messrs. John Pierpont & Geo. E. Ellis. — as Mr. Pierpont related the case at my father's house in Boston. — In those trying days, always and everywhere, Dr. Gannett was foremost and bitter in accusations of the Abolitionists, & of their work; and made himself the very most conspicuous enemy of it to be found among the Unitarian Ministers.

If you wish to quote me as authority for the words by Dr. G., of these disputed words, you are welcome to do so, — I mean to Dr. G. I am not going, at present at least, to enter the public lists on this question.

With love. Very truly Yrs

Sam'l. May Jr.

I send you herewith a letter of Rev. John Pierpont to me, touching Dr. Gannett's course.

ms. B. 1. 6 v. 13, p. 89